

is able to record considerable progress, not only since 1950 but even since the last review in 1964. Using the yardstick of 1.5 geriatric hospital beds per 1,000 population and 20 welfare beds per 1,000 elderly, the province is only short of 78 (3½ per cent) hospital and 807 (26 per cent) welfare beds. This overall deficiency in hospital beds will be made up during the next few months and over half the welfare beds needed are already under construction.

Needless to say Dr. Adams is not satisfied yet, and for three reasons:

- (1) There is a marked inequality of distribution of both hospital and welfare beds so that one large teaching hospital complex is 109 beds short and one county has only 11.5 beds per thousand elderly.
- (2) There are areas of the province which are not provided with the services of a geriatric physician. Many of those already in post are working with scattered antiquated and under-staffed accommodation. As a result the development of a properly organised domiciliary, outpatient, progressive inpatient and rehabilitation geriatric service is occurring very slowly.
- (3) There is still a tendency both amongst administrators and doctors to regard the care of the elderly as someone else's business. One hospital management committee with a gross shortage of geriatric beds has actually deferred plans to make good the numbers provided during the years under review in spite of advice to the contrary. Welfare services are still administered separately from the hospital services and within the hospital services the care of the elderly confused is regarded as separate from the elderly sane. Perhaps the introduction of the Area Health Boards will break down the administrative barriers. But it is only by constant teaching from people like Dr. Adams that the barriers in people's minds will be broken down.

In this document the sector plan for geriatric services for Belfast is described in detail. It is basic to Dr. Adams' thinking that the care of the elderly should be carried through from beginning to end as close as possible to the patient's old haunts, relatives and friends. It is therefore natural that he should insist that accommodation for geriatric patients should be built within the area where they live and be administered by the hospital which provides the acute medical (and ultimately psychiatric services).

Similarly it is Dr. Adams' contention that geriatricians are advisers and teachers of their subject. As such they should have the backing of a university department with research facilities and should provide teaching for all kinds of professional staff. By giving all doctors some training in geriatric techniques Dr. Adams hopes that all doctors, general practitioners, physicians, surgeons and psychiatrists included will carry their share in the provision of a health service for the aged as well as the young in the community.

This is an admirable report and the profession in Northern Ireland should be very grateful for Dr. Adams' continued guidance in the development of this aspect of the province's health service.

P.C.E.

HUMAN GROWTH AFTER BIRTH. By David Sinclair, M.A., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.S.E. (Pp. x+180; figs. 64. £1.40). Oxford University Press, 1969.

THIS book should interest all concerned with the broader biological aspects of medicine. The author claims it has been written specifically for pre-clinical medical students to provide a general idea of the principles of growth after birth. It goes far beyond this and is a useful introduction to many aspects of biology of special interest and importance in medicine. There is a discussion in terms of simple mathematics of growth in height and weight. The growth of tissues and systems is then described. Chapters relate to changes in shape and posture, factors influencing growth and maturation and those concerned with growth and repair and with disturbances of growth and with old age. This is all illustrated by many apt examples which must broaden the reader's knowledge of human biology. Some of these are from the classical work of D'Arcy Thompson, "Growth and Form", which was an inspiration to many thirty years ago, but the work is a modern exposition rich in basic biological concepts and not over-burdened with details. The modern student is fortunate to have such a book bridging biology and medicine.

J.E.M.